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Institute for Health & Equity

March 16, 2019

Dear City of Milwaukee Common Council Public Safety and Health Committee:

I'd like to provide expert testimony regarding the most common source of lead resulting in elevated blood lead levels in our children in the City of Milwaukee.

I am a Professor of General Pediatrics and Community Health and Director of the Institute for Health and Equity at the Medical College of Wisconsin. I have practiced in the central city of Milwaukee for 25 years. I served as the MCW Chief of General Pediatrics and Medical Director of the Children's Hospital Downtown Health Center for 7 years. I currently care for patients and teach pediatric residents at Children's Medical Group-Midtown. I have cared for hundreds of children at risk for and experiencing elevated blood levels.

The scientific evidence strongly demonstrates that the primary source of lead poisoning is paint, not water. Here are a several sources:

- Lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust in older buildings are the most common sources of lead poisoning in children. Other sources include contaminated air, water and soil. (Mayo Clinic <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/lead-poisoning/symptoms-causes/syc-20354717>)
- Although there are several exposure sources, lead-based paint is the most widespread and dangerous high-dose source of lead exposure. (CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/sources.htm>)
- Lead from paint, including lead-contaminated dust, is one of the most common causes of lead poisoning. (US EPA <https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead>)
- The primary source of lead exposure for children in Wisconsin is lead in paint or varnish in house dust. (Wisconsin Department of Health Services <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/sources.htm>)
- The most common cause of lead poisoning is dust and chips from old paint. (NY Department of Health <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/sources.htm>)
- Lead-based paint and lead contaminated dust are the most common sources of lead exposure for children. (Florida Department of Health http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/lead-poisoning/_documents/oregon-lead-sources.pdf)

If you need more information, please contact me at jmeurer@mcw.edu.

Sincerely,

John Meurer, MD, MBA

Professor of General Pediatrics and Community Health
Director of the MCW Institute for Health & Equity